Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape

-Create a better city with multicultural communities

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Abstract

This study explores the interconnections between multiculturalism, social integration and public spaces. Insights into these relationships were gained through fieldwork observing the social activities of different cultural communities in the public spaces within the research site, Cook Street West, and investigating their perceptions and experiences based on the relationship between the Cook Street West residents and its public spaces. By understanding the localised forms of social well-being in this highly diverse urban neighbourhood, a conceptual design framework was developed to explore the renovation opportunities of designing a new type of public place, which would help to support the healthy growth of Cook Street West - a unique ethno-cultural neighbourhood in Auckland City.
DECLARATION OF WORK

This thesis represents my own work

The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.

Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirement set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2013 - 1082
Here, I would like to thank several special people for their support on my research journey:

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I would especially like to express my gratitude to the residents of Cook Street west, who volunteered their time to participate in my interviews. Their views and ideas inspired the way in which I have aligned myself with my subject matter throughout this research.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Question
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1.1 Research Question:

How can urban design practice accommodate and enhance the interaction of diverse culture in the public/third spaces at Cook Street west, and contribute positively to the social exchange within diverse communities?
1.2 Introduction

Since the birth of the modern nation of New Zealand, Auckland is the most popular destination for migrants, both in numbers and variety. Multicultural society is present in most cities, an enormous diversity of ingredients and people are present in urban areas (Peter. K. 2011). As a result, Auckland is the most ethnically diverse place in the country (Gordon. M. 2008). Fifty five per cent of Auckland’s growth came from immigration between the years 2001 to 2006. Auckland is home to over 180 ethnicities and has the largest Polynesian population in the world (Auckland Unitary Plan 2013).

To achieve the “world’s most liveable city” goal, Auckland must have room for other cultural values to reflect its entire people within its landscape. Ethnicity can be considered a viable determinant of environmental preference when it is associated with a deeper level of culturally based behaviour in public places; people from every cultural background will develop a strong sense of ownership and “sense of place” in their lives (Lanfer, A. G. M. T. 2010).

This research is premised on the understanding that the lack of socially cohesive public/third space to accommodate residents’ diverse cultural needs in Cook Street west is a problem that leads to social isolation in this highly diverse neighbourhood. The research sets out to solve this problem by considering the role that landscape architecture plays in cultural integration and to study the interaction between diversity-associated cultural expressions of newcomers and multiple use of public spaces.

In this research I will observe, listen and learn the needs, thoughts, perspectives and attitudes among the diverse constituencies of Cook Street west. I will gain insight into this complex
community problem, learn about different cultural perspectives and experiences based on the relationship between the Cook Street west residents and urban public spaces within Cook Street west. I will explore how everyday spatial practice is linked to the use of the public place and entanglement between people and the material and visual culture of public spaces in Cook Street west. I will find what the shared values, preferences and interests are between different cultural communities, and use these as a lens for looking at the proposed Cook Street west renovation project; to examine the gaps between the ‘newcomer’ modes of inhabiting places and the way existing public spaces in Cook Street west are engaged from a multicultural perspective.

This research aims to:

- Develop a conceptual framework to assist in understanding multiple cultural values in urban landscapes.
- Identify opportunities and challenges of how multicultural values can be integrated and used in urban design practice.
- Investigate how urban landscapes can be designed and managed to foster positive community relationships, and promote interactions in an ethno-cultural neighbourhood.

The streams above help form an interactive design process, exploring the renovation opportunity to invent a new type of public place which would support the healthy growth of ethno-communities in Cook Street west.
1.3 The scope

The goal of this research is to explore the linkage between multicultural values and urban design practices. The scope of this research includes:

- Literature reviews of existing multicultural planning and policy.
- Case studies to investigate existing global situations of multiculturalism in urban design and its practice in recent developments from the micro scale to macro scale.
- Exploration of Auckland’s immigration history, specifically around the proposed design site.
- Observations along with structured interviews and questionnaires to collect and analyse social behaviours and landscape experiences of inner city residents within the proposed design site.
- Identification of the key differences and similarities of how people from different cultural backgrounds view and use the urban landscape.
This research is aimed at involving ethno-cultural communities in an urban design process, observing different cultural communities’ social activities in the Cook Street west, investigating perceptions and experiences on the relationship between Cook Street west residents and urban public space within the site. To find where the shared values, preferences and interests are between different cultural communities. To integrate their views to enhance the urban design development, in order to create an inclusive environment to support the healthy growth of ethno-communities.
1.4 Research Method:

The methodology used in this research includes:

1. The Investigation of the research site – Cook street west, which includes
   - Site observation and analysis.
   - Interviews with the residents of Cook Street west, learning from their experience of
     using the public spaces.

2. Research into the theories of multiculturalism and social sustainability in the public spaces.

3. Literature review on multiculturalism, Social interaction and public space and Public space
   / Third space.

4. Case studies of the multicultural public space design precedent.

5. And, the design development of Cook Street west.
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Case studies
- Contemporary
- Holistic
- Real-life context
- Global
- Micro scale
- Macro scale

Literature Reviews
- Contemporary
- Holistic
- Real-life context
- Global

Fig 1.2 Research Methods diagram

1.4

Table

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Chart

- Core
- Invisible
- Visible

- Sense of place
  - Patch
  - Zone
  - Connection
  - Block
  - Housing types
  - Gate
  - Street
  - Park

- Methodologies
  - Difference
  - Common Good
  - Togetherness

- People
  - Identities
    - The bodies
    - Life Style
    - Bio Clock
    - Social ground
    - Age
    - Activity zone
    - Race

- Place
  - Channel the Immigrations policies
  - Promotes interaction, exchange
  - Break up the cultural barriers
  - Channel the Immigrations policies
  - Promotes interaction, exchange
  - Fostering positive community relations
  - Create inclusive environment to support the health growth of ethnic-communities

- Outcome

Fig 1.2 Research Methods diagram
2.0 COOK STREET WEST

2.1 Site Location & Character
2.2 Social and Cultural Context
2.3 Landscape analysis
2.1 Site Location & Character:

I have chosen Cook Street west as the research area for my project (refer to figure 2.1). The site is approximately 20 ha, located at the entrance to Auckland CBD. This is where people get their first impression of Auckland CBD when they arrive from the airport or south of Auckland; it is currently highly diverse. There is a mix of high rise residential apartments (Hobson Gardens, Zest, and Sugar Tree), multi-storey commercial buildings, huge car parks, churches, hotels, nightclubs, retail, souvenir shops, restaurants, schools and a range of different types of businesses. In addition, there are students, local CBD workers, new immigrants from Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands, visitors and shop owners. Most of them are transitionally living in the neighbourhood. Dissatisfaction of upper Hobson Street and Nelson Street living comes from a lack of sense of security and safety, noise nuisance, small dwellings, absence of outdoor recreation spaces, and no sense of community (Murphy, L, 2008). This area has a unique texture and is highly idiosyncratic in Auckland. There are endless opportunities and challenges here.
This map/plan is illustrative only and all information should be independently verified on site before taking any action. Copyright Auckland Council. Boundary information from LINZ (Crown Copyright Reserved). Whilst due care has been taken, Auckland Council gives no warranty as to the accuracy and completeness of any information on this map/plan and accepts no liability for any error, omission or use of the information. Height datum: Auckland 1946.

Fig 2.2  Cook Street west location and site boundary
Not to scale
The site is bounded by major arterial roads, (Union Street, Wellesley Street, Sale Street and Hobson Street) and has a 12 degree steep slope dropping from 47m at the top of Union Street to 11m at the intersection of Nelson and Wellesley streets.

Auckland CBD began to develop after Captain Hobson founded Auckland on 18 September 1840, with 2000 CBD residents from Europe. Since then it quickly became a financial and service industry centre with new high-rise offices when Auckland replaced Wellington as New Zealand’s financial capital around the 1980s.*

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Fig 2.3 Cook Street west location and CBD content
1:15000 @A4
2.2 Social and Cultural Context

2.2.1 Before 1990s

Approximately 70,000 people lived in the Auckland CBD in 1926, most of them residing in a range of residential dwellings - detached houses, terraces, as well as number of apartment blocks ranging from three to ten stories (Malcolm McKinnon, 1997).

With the process of urbanisation around the 1940s, the CBD resident numbers dropped sharply to approximately 10,000 in 1945 (FRIESEN, 2009).

In the mid 1970s, gentrification has generally taken place in Auckland CBD. Gentrification refers to, “a process of neighbourhood transformation in which working-class and poor residents are displaced by an influx of middle class residents.” (Hammel, 2009) “Young, socially liberal, tertiary-educated Pakeha” professionals began to investigate and renovate cheap houses in the west of Auckland’s CBD with the desire for “new ways of living”, which started to increase the prestige of living in the CBD. But the rental property market soon steadily declined; to rent a house in the CBD become harder for the lower income families as the housing market turned. Many were forced to relocate to peripheral suburbs while the young professional residents moved in (FRIESEN, 2009).

The gentrification process impacted on the residential landscape as well as on the commercial and cultural landscapes. Many of the ‘gentrifiers’ had returned from overseas and were in search of ‘urbanity’ in terms of cafes, restaurants, bars and other cultural features. The rapid development
of the CBD and inner suburbs are illustrative of this. The impacts of gentrification on the
CBD itself were limited and the recorded CBD residents continued to drop to less than 2,000
in 1990. Meanwhile, with the delayed impact on global property markets and following the
share market crash of October 1987, many property development companies collapsed and
the office space vacancy rate in Auckland CBD rose to 25 per cent in 1991 (Morrison, 1999).

From the early 1990s onwards, a distinctive transformation has taken place in the CBD; a
number of key factors affected this. Firstly, the regional growth strategy encouraged the
residential intensification and related zoning changes, favouring residential development
in the CBD. Then the Immigration Act of 1987 resulted in accelerated immigration and
new flows from Asia. Also from the mid 1990s onwards, the promotion of international
education and international investment in property development widely impacted not
only re-population, but also the rise of the CBD in economic, cultural and political terms.
(FRIESEN, 2009).
2.2.2 After 1990s

Auckland CBD has dramatically changed since early 1990; the number of residential and commercial apartment buildings in the CBD has steadily increased. According to Bayleys Research 2008, there were 6,000 units by the year 2000 and then this sharply increased to 18,000 units by 2007, although promoting the residential development of CBD apartments is one of the Auckland Regional Smart Growth Strategy goals, in order to reduce travel distances to work (Franks, 2007). However, students, especially from Asia, increasingly took up the supply of new apartments. Not only are the two large tertiary institutions located in the Auckland’s CBD, The University of Auckland and AUT, but also many private training institutions and language schools are located in the heart of Auckland as well (FRIESEN, 2009).

The population in the Auckland CBD has increased dramatically over the last two decades to 17,937 by the year 2006 and this increase has been largely driven by students, new immigrants, and visitors. There are three different residential groups in the CBD: spacious harbour-edge apartments (high income); the student-dominated quarter to the east; and the low-income population to the west (Murphy.L, 2008).

Nowadays, the characteristics of the population in Auckland CBD are markedly different compared with the other Auckland suburbs. The CBD is the most diverse area in Auckland. One noticeable difference is the ethnic compositions in the CBD; 66 per cent of the population were born overseas. The largest broad ethnic group in the CBD was Asian, at 47 per cent, this proportion has risen dramatically from only 11 per cent in 1991.
Compared with the CBD, only 12 percent were Asian living in the inner suburbs such as Freemans bay, Ponsonby and Parnell. 71 per cent of its population was kiwi European, which reflects the European gentrification of the mid 1970s.

Social tensions between new immigrants, local working residents, and students are more intense across the Auckland CBD. Due to lack of communities, CBD residents are housed in multi-unit apartments. Distances between ‘inner city’ neighbourhoods are further away than suburban areas. Therefore, there is a very common feeling among inner city residents that they are out of place, and they don’t belong (Francis Leo Collins, 2011).

Statistics New Zealand suggests that the inner city population could increase to 45,000 by 2026. How to manage and plan for these major population increases will be the challenges for the new Auckland Council.
2.2.3 Tomorrow*

The Auckland City Council’s City Centre Masterplan has indicated the future vision of Cook Street west is to provide a pleasant, safe and comfortable environment that is a resident-friendly, culturally-rich and creative, attractive neighbourhood. Hobson and Nelson Streets will be developed as an attractive boulevard and become a green link to connect this western edge of the city to the centre, and the plan has predicted that more than 5,000 additional apartment residents will move to the Nelson and Hobson Street ridge.

The strategy identifies the opportunity to develop Cook Street west as a vibrant urban community and quality public realm, which encourages street life.

The future changes for Cook Street west will include reduction in the vehicle lanes on Hobson and Nelson Streets and widening footpaths as part of a linear park. Also possibly closing the Wellington Street motorway off-ramp to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment to encourage people to use the streets.

Additionally, the proposed New Zealand International Convention Centre will creates a major destination for many local and international visitors, which will in turn make new demands on the public realm such as quality pedestrian movement. This could act as a catalyst for
the transformation of this vibrant urban neighbourhood; it could be a catalyst for initial redevelopment of some sites into complimentary businesses such as hotels, cafés and restaurants.

These changes will alter the existing perception of Hobson and Nelson Streets as motorway extensions. The streets will need to function as pedestrian walking routes as well as the residents’ front entrances.

2.3 Landscape analysis

AUCKLAND CONTEXT

Within the Auckland context, Cook Street west is 5km away from Western Springs and Birkenhead, 9km away from Lynfield, St Helier and Penrose, 10km away from Te Atatu south and 12km away from Rangitoto Island.
2.3 Landscape analysis

AUCKLAND CBD CONTEXT

Within the CBD context, Cook Street west is 150m away from Victoria Park, 400m away from Western Park and Myers Park, and 1000m away from Britomart Transport Centre.
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Fig 2.9 Landscape analysis
Auckland CBD context
Not To Scale
2.3 Landscape analysis

COOK STREET WEST OLD AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY 1

Old aerial photography showing Cook Street west in the 1940s.
2.3 Landscape analysis

COOK STREET WEST OLD
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY 2

Old aerial photography showing Cook Street west in the 1960s.
Fig 2.11 Landscape analysis
Cook Street west old aerial photography 2
1:8000@A4
2.3 Landscape analysis

COOK STREET WEST OLD AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY 3

Old aerial photography showing Cook Street west in the 1990s.
2.3 Landscape analysis

Site Boundary

The site is bounded by major arterial roads, (Union Street, Wellesley Street, Sale Street and Hobson Street) and has a 12 degree steep slope dropping from 47m at the top of Union Street to 11m at the intersection of Nelson and Wellesley streets.
3.0 SITE INVESTIGATION

3.1 Methodology
3.2 Non-participant observation
3.3 Interview
3.4 Findings
3.5 Summary
Fig 3.1 Group of people outside of supermarket at Hobson street
Time: 5 March 2014
In order to find how local people experience the public spaces in Cook Street west, as well as learn more about the diverse needs and values of these ever-changing neighbourhood social and cultural groups within the Cook Street west public spaces, a site investigation was carried out to gain a deep understanding about the interactions between the spaces and its people.
Fig 3.2 Cook Street west panoramas Time: 30 March 2013
3.1 Methodology

“The philosophical position argues that humans, and human behaviour, cannot be understood or studied outside the context of a person’s daily life and activities. Methodological strategies subsumed within this definition are cognitive, observational, phenomenological, historical, ethnographic, and discourse approaches to research.” (Setha Low, 2005)

Each of these approaches varies in terms of their appropriateness for particular problems, level of analysis, distinct aspects of the social world and availability to the researcher (Setha Low, 2005).

In this research, observational and phenomenological approaches are employed to gain insight into the relationship between the public spaces and social integration in Cook Street west. The site observation was focused on exploring the complex lives of people. This explorative character of the research led to the decision to choose the observational and phenomenological methods to study the people and spaces.

The observational approach focuses on the “human”, human activities and mental or behavioural processes. It is instructed with simple observation of activates and behavioural mapping, as well as elaborate systems of time-lapse photography of public spaces (Whyte, 1980), in which overt behaviour is observed by the researcher and are the mainstays of qualitative research. It is the most valid method to investigate people and people’s behaviour, as only systematic observations of public interactions can give information about what is happening in a public place (Whyte, 1980). Observations reveal the routine activities that collectively make up those practices of everyday life of the participants. I was able to directly observe and document the non-verbal behaviour of individuals and groups, as well as carry out behavioural mapping in Cook Street west during the study period.

In contrast to observational methodologies, phenomenological approaches are more focused on “place,” and “how place grows out of experience, and symbolises that experience.” (Richardson, 1984) This can’t be separated from the act of perceiving. It is helpful not only in giving rich explanations of complex phenomena, but it also helps to gain insight into the specific context of Cook Street west. Phenomenological methods were used in order to theorise about how the place is experienced by people. The observations were needed to study how places are perceived by different people.

Under the observational approach, the information is sought by way of the investigator’s own direct observation without interacting with the respondent (Kothari, 2004). Under the phenomenological approach the participant’s experience involves obtaining comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis
“it is always difficult to study people in a place, especially when you are trying to collect something as sensitive, intangible, and variable as cultural values.” (Peter. K., 2011)
for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience. The approach “seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of behaviour as they manifest themselves in their perceived immediacy.” (Charles R. Dills, 1997)

The aim of the phenomenological approach is to determine what an experience means for the participants who have had the experience and provide a comprehensive description of it. (Moustakas, 1994)

As this research tries to draw a full multidimensional picture of the subject of investigation, I have chosen multiple methods in order to strengthen the validity and reliability of the results. Both methods allowed me to investigate the role of public spaces in people’s daily lives, what kind of social activities occurred in the public spaces, how different cultural identities affect people’s experiences and perceptions. Non-participant observations and interviews were chosen to collect data that assisted in answering the main research question. Archival research and photography were also used to support the data recordings.

The following section will provide further detailed methods, based on observational and phenomenological approaches listed above, of data collection and data analysis.
3.2 Non-participant observation

In order to understand the existing Cook Street west and its residents, as well as the interactions between the spaces and people, the non-participant observations were carried out to record basic data about the location and activities of groups and individuals, and the meanings that people attach to issues in their everyday life contexts within the observation site for a period of 12 months from December 2013 to November 2014. I carried out all these sessions.

The observations were carried out during peak Pedestrian hours of 8-10am, 12-2pm and 5-7pm on both weekdays and weekends, each observation took approximately 30-50 minutes. Observation notes and maps were used to record the findings.

The phenomenological approach enables me to observe how the place was used and by whom, and the characteristics of different users, as well as the actions and interactions of the space users and cultural manifestations and representations within the public spaces in Cook Street west.

Therefore, the data I have collected represents what happens in Cook Street west during certain times of the day. This involves no clarification from the participants; therefore, I have collected data based on my own observations. The analysis and findings from the observation notes reflect my personal opinions, thoughts and interpretations.
The following aspects were discovered during the observations:

- The spectrum of the public space users in the Cook Street west.
- What activities happen here.
- People’s behaviour in the public spaces.
- What cultural events happened, and when.

The observation period was chosen deliberately to cover full year circle in order to gain more in-depth information on how the public spaces in Cook Street west were used by participants during different seasons, and when the temperature changed, what sorts of activities or events happened.

Notes recorded on the observation sheets and maps (appendix 1) included the age group, group size activities, interactions of people, the pedestrian movement patterns, as well as date, time, temperature, weather, sounds, noises and other essential findings.

Fig 3.5 Man rides unicycle in Cook Street west
Time: 16 Nov 2013
3.3 Interview

The meaning of social interactions and relationships in a place cannot simply be observed though one’s eye. To investigate the relationships between the place and its user, the observations have to involve the thoughts and opinions of the participants. A conversation with the participant is a powerful way to step inside the culture of this exclusive newcomer community in Cook Street west, and explore their multiple points of view. Interviews were carried out in order to provide extensive and in-depth feedback regarding to participant’s attitudes (opinions, impressions, expectations, etc) toward public space settings based on their cultural traditions and past experiences, in order to understand how individuals give meaning to their everyday lives and how they perceive others in public spaces. Since diversity and complexity characterise the ways in which inhabitants construct their perceptions of and ideas about the meaning of public spaces.

The interviews were conducted between January and July 2014, and involved people from a variety of cultural backgrounds at Cook Street west. Two types of interviews were used during the survey, face-to-face interviews and cloud interviews.

Face-to-face interviews:
To recruit face-to-face interview participants, at each time I spent two to three hours in the research area approaching people in public spaces, such as parks, plazas etc., and asked for their participation. When participants agreed to participate, then the interview was conducted between the participant and me. The conversations were engaged in natural, everyday situations to discover the cultural frameworks, and systems of meaning that are important to the individual users. The interviews took approximately 15-30 minutes.
Cloud interviews:

Cloud interviews are based on the cloud technology; the WeChat social media app, ‘Look Around’ was used (details attached) to find participants. WeChat is a mobile social media tool that gathers all of the sharing and communication tools in one place, including video calls, text messages, images and hold-to-talk voice message. The ‘Look Around’ function can help researchers find participants who are using WeChat nearby, and conduct interviews though WeChat platform.

To recruit cloud interview participants, I situated myself in the middle of the research area, and used the WeChat ‘Look Around’ feature to check who was using WeChat within the research site I then approached them though WeChat to ask for their participation. The information of the project was sent to the participant as a WeChat text message. Then I explained the research to the participants by using WeChat voice message or live voice chat. When the participants agreed to participate, I then sent each question through as a WeChat text message, and the participant sent the answer back as either text messages, voice messages or photos. There was no face-to-face contact between the participants and me during this process.

The questionnaire was divided into three categories and ten questions were discussed. All interviews were carried out according to a pre-designed, open-ended questionnaire (Appendix 2).
General information about the participants and their cultural background was aligned with their ethnicity.

Three questions were asked in this section to record some basic demographic information about participants, such as age, sex and ethnic associations.

Participants’ experiences of use of public urban spaces in Cook Street west, and how different ethnic groups conceptualise the public spaces.

This section was designed to investigate the participants’ current public space experience. The questions set out to determine how different ethnic groups perceive the function, structure, and appearance of public spaces.

What is the breadth of needs among different ethnic groups with regards to public spaces and living environments, and participant’s version on how to improve the living environment around their neighbourhood?

This section consisted of a series of detailed questions regarding Cook Street west, and also the participant’s daily life experiences of the public spaces. The questions not only related to Cook Street west, they also covered their overall insights, opinions and expectations regarding public spaces and overall living environments.
Participant sample

In order to obtain exact demographic characteristics of the research site, participants were recruited for interviews mainly on site at Cook Street west.

The participants were selected randomly on the basis that they happened to be at the designated recruitment location. Most of them were living or working on the research site and were familiar with Cook Street west. Some of them were visitors or temporarily walking past.

The final sample size of this study consisted of a total number of 26 interview participants.

Participant’s ethnic groups:

- New Zealand European
- New Zealand Maori
- Vietnam
- Japan
- China
- Canada
- Germany
- India
- Korea
3.4 Findings

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the research results. The structure of the data analysis collected during the site investigation has been divided into four categories.

Two types of data collected from both non-participant site observation and interviews were analysed together to give a full picture of people and spaces in Cook Street west: How people from different cultural backgrounds use and experience public spaces in Cook Street west, and how different ethnic groups conceptualise public spaces.

Activities:
Walking, resting, chatting, waiting and play.

Public spaces:
Natural settings, urban settings, parks, amenities, high density, accessible and welcoming.

Experiences of using the public spaces in Cook Street west:
No such place, isolated, too far away.

Opinions and suggestions of improving living environment in Cook Street west:
Parks within walking distance, public transport, culturally comfortable.

The existing public spaces in Cook Street west are used for many activities and shared by people from various cultural backgrounds. There are many foreign businesses along the street,
especially along Hobson and Cook Streets, which include a Chinese newspaper, three Asian supermarkets, restaurants and Wah Lee, as well as some creative businesses such as a photography studio and make-up studios. A few international schools here also contribute to diversifying the neighbourhood. Most of them have a sign in both English and foreign languages.

During my observations, the main activity that happened in Cook Street west was walking due to the exclusive location of Cook Street west and its residential population density. The foot traffic is heavy during the peak hours to connect its residents to other parts of the CBD and to connect working people to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods such as Ponsonby and Freeman’s Bay.

The existing purpose of Nelson and Hobson Streets is to stream the heavy traffic coming to the CBD. The wide, seven-lane motorway extension accommodating seemingly speeding traffic would create an unpleasant walking atmosphere in which pedestrians may feel unsafe. However, as the Nelson and Hobson Streets are both straight one-way streets, it is far easier to predict when and where the cars will drive. Pedestrians take more ownership of the road and obviously it is easier and safer for people to cross the street. I observed that regardless of their cultural background, people would cross those two streets without obeying the traffic light signals; they crossed when they needed to, during both peak and off-peak hours (refer fig 3.19). When I asked during an interview if the speeding cars trouble...
him when he’s walking, a Japanese man mentioned, “Yes, speeding cars is very scary, but not here on Hobson Street, I don’t really feel the speed of the cars here, the carparks along the street provide a good barrier zone... Peak hours? no, as you can see during the peak hours, the cars are all congested here, we can cross freely among the cars during those peak hours.”

Various walking and transportation tools were used here as well, especially during the winter, such as electric scooters and electric bicycles. During the interview, a kiwi scooter user said, “There is no bus at Cook Street west connecting to my home, and it’s cool to use it, I can travel fast after work, and won’t be held up in the traffic.” And he also explained that he thinks using an electric scooter is environmentally friendly and although it’s fast, it won’t cause any troubles to the other pedestrians. Somehow, I found the use of new types of transportation was not that popular among the “newcomer”. I interviewed a Vietnamese immigration family who arrived in New Zealand no more than four years ago. When I asked them about the public transport in Cook Street west and whether they would consider using new types of transportation such as electric scooters in the future, they said, “Yes, I ride bikes back in Vietnam, but we won’t consider of using them here because we don’t feel safe to ride here in New Zealand and we don’t know where the cycle way is... No, maybe not, the electric scooters are used among the pedestrians; we don’t really understand the ‘rule’ for using it on the footpath.”

Another interesting finding is that during the summer period, a few Asian women walk with umbrellas. A Chinese lady I interviewed said, “It’s normal to carry an umbrella on sunny summer day, it’s very popular where I come from, and I definitely need it here where most public spaces
are too exposed for me and you know that the UV level in New Zealand is very high, I don’t need sun tan at all.” And when I ask her opinion on improving the living environment on Cook Street west, she immediately responded that, “More trees along the street would be better to provide a nice shelter in summer.”

In contrast to this, When I asked two Canadian women, their opinions on their perceptions of public spaces, they mentioned that, “Parks are an essential element to a public space, trees and lawn... Summer here is great; we like to do as much sunbathing as possible.”

With regards to walking, many people commented that the existing walking experience of using the footpath is generally fine, although a few people who lived in Cook Street mentioned the steep slope along Cook Street make their everyday journey harder, and a lady from Singapore complained that some people smoking in front of the building in plain sight are inappropriate behaviour public. She also made comments about a solution to this by referring to her past living experience, “There should be a specially designed place for those smokers, I mean something like a cage at the back of the building, just like where I lived before in Singapore. People can’t smoke out in the public.”

To improve walking abilities in Cook Street west, many people living in Cook Street suggested widening the footpaths, as well as some people living in Nelson and Hobson Streets suggesting to have an additional pedestrian link to the apartment blocks where they live, such as Hobson Gardens and Zest.
Other main activities that happen in Cook Street west are resting, chatting and waiting. Due to the lack of public seats in Cook Street west, most people are seated on the ground in front of a shop or a building to rest by themselves or in a group chatting with each other. Some people are seated on the grass where possible. When I asked the participants’ experience of using public spaces Cook Street west, the seats became a hot topic; more than 80 per cent of participants mentioned that is hard to find a seat, even at the bus stop there are no seats provided.

Many participants experienced a lack of basic street furniture. A German woman who I interviewed, working in a gift shop stated that, “We don’t really prefer sitting on the ground, but there are no seats around… I can’t go too far away to Victoria Park or Albert Park; I can only take a short break… my suggestion to improve this neighbourhood is to have some seats and some vegetation around.”

From my investigation, lack of crucial street elements is the one of the biggest problems which decreases the quality of living in Cook Street west, and this not only troubles the local residents; some visitors I interviewed also expressed the same experience.

I observed that some people wait outside their cars along Hobson Street, Nelson Street and Cook Street car parks areas. This happens very often especially during the middle of the day. I interviewed two of them, and asked why they waiting outside their cars. A man from India said, “I don’t like this part of town, but I have many friends living here. Every time I have to wait for
them in my car because there are no seats here and no place we can meet nearby...In my view, convenient public transport to connect this area is very important to improve the living environment. If I don’t have to drive here, then I can meet my friends somewhere else in the town.”

Currently, in Cook Street west, no place is designed for people to meet, relax or play in public. However, I did observe people actively playing in the public areas such as footpaths, road sides and grass verges in front of the apartments, especially during the afternoon. Dancing, skateboarding, unicycling, play with balls, people taking every opportunity to entertain themselves. However, during my interviews, many newcomers who have lived in New Zealand for less than five years mentioned that they never play in any public areas in Cook Street west, because the place is not designed for it nor has any certain rules to indicate that it’s a play area so they normally avoid doing so. One elderly Chinese woman told me. “I feel so scared that some people skateboard on the footpath when I’m walking around.”

Fig 3.18 Man cycling at Cook Street west
Time: 25 Nov 2014
Fig 3.19 People crossing Hobson Street whenever they want day and night.
3.5 Summary:

Undoubtedly, the most consistent response among all respondents, regardless of their ethnic association, was the need for improving the public/third spaces which facilitate relaxation and recovery from stress in Cook Street west. Although people coming from different cultures certainly have different ideas of what a great public/third space would be, and most of the “newcomer” referred to the great public spaces in their old life on some level. People from UK, Canada and Germany, state the variability and functions of the public spaces are important; a place that would support various public activities is the key to bringing people together. “My ideal neighbourhood is an interesting place and one where I am able to meet different people”, a German woman mentioned. While New Zealand Maori and people from the Asia, including Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese etc, pay more attention to the amenities of a public space, the natural settings are also important to them. A Chinese man said, “... of cause the view is important and that’s why I like living in the apartment, low maintenance, and good views towards the water.” Also a Maori woman described, “The CBD is too polluted for me, I prefer natural settings, it’s better to build green buildings here and more trees and vegetation in every street.” Also, most of them prefer group activities; most of them use the public spaces with their friends or as a group.

Also, the travel distance and time to and from the public/third space is critically important. Many participants mentioned they wouldn’t or don’t want to travel too far from where they work and live, and having present some basic amenities or public elements such as water, trees and vegetation is crucial to improving the living environment in this culturally diverse neighbourhood of Cook Street west.
4.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Theoretical framework
4.2 Multiculturalism
4.3 Social interaction
4.4 Public space / Third space
4.1 Theoretical framework

How can urban design practice accommodate and enhance the interaction of diverse cultures in the public/third spaces at Cook Street west, and contribute positively to the social exchange within diverse communities?

To answer this question, I started to focus on the already-existing interactions between people of diverse backgrounds in urban public spaces from a diverse array of contexts, which have positively contributed to building social cohesion.

“Cultural difference will somehow be dissolved by a process of mixing or hybridization of culture in public space”. (Valentine, 2008)

As Valentine (2008) notes, the key to successful urban development lies in policies that encourage the presence and interaction of ‘cultural difference’ in urban spaces.

Three key pillars underpin the theoretical framework of this research: multicultural values, public/third spaces and the social integration between them. By linking these three key concepts, this study extends the ordinary knowledge beyond the disciplinary boundaries of public space.
This research seeks to incorporate a focus on everyday intercultural ‘contact’ in cities like Auckland as a means to overcome difference more generally, but also to utilise ‘diversity advantage’ as a means to achieve the development of public/third space (Francis Leo Collins, 2009).

It is likely to be more concentrated among those who are ‘culturally different’ and lead not to greater intercultural encounters, but to an urban experience increasingly characterised by more closely connected socioeconomic and cultural differences (Francis Leo Collins, 2009).
4.2 Multiculturalism

While there are many different ways to define multiculturalism, most agree that the field of multiculturalism is relatively new, emerging first in the Western democracies prior to World War II; it is part of the human rights revolution which explicitly propounded the equality of races and peoples (Kymlicka, 2012). Today multiculturalism is largely driven by immigration and circulation across the nation. Tourists and sojourning executives also contribute to multiculturalism (Qadeer, 1997a).

The term multiculturalism has many definitions:

- Multiculturalism describes the growing diversity and multiple identities that have come to characterise the era in which we live (Bloor, K. 2010).

- Multiculturalism is a process in which different cultures can engage with each other (Bloor, K. 2010).

- Multiculturalism is the recognition that cultures, modes of communication and group identification other than the dominant one are worthy and deserve a certain autonomy, it’s suggested you suspend judgment and try to understand people on their own terms and own cultural baggage. (Podur, J. 2003).
• Multiculturalism is a way that minority rights, liberal democracy, and human rights can comfortably coexist together (Kymlicka, W. 2012).

• Multiculturalism ... is not just about inclusion, nor is it merely an acceptance of difference; rather it actively ‘achieves’ diversity, it ‘expands the range of imagined life experiences for the members of society’s core groups’ (Mitchell, 2004).

• Multiculturalism is possible, but only if communities feel confident enough to engage in a dialogue and where there is enough public space for them to interact with the dominant culture (B. a. B. Parekh, H., 1989).

• ‘Multicultural real’ that exists in everyday interactions (Wise, 2005)
“The city is more than just a sum of its buildings; it is the sum of its communities. The most successful urban communities are very often those that are the most diverse, and yet poor urban design and planning can stifle the very diversity that makes communities successful. Just as poor urban design can lead to sterility monoculture, successful planning can support the conditions needed for diverse communities.” (Talen E 2008)

International migration is a part of the process of globalisation, which is reshaping our economic, political, social, and cultural interconnections (Liu. B, Floyd.M.M. 2014). Multiculturalism and integration have become hot topics throughout the world (Peter. K. 2011). Migration to cities brings together cultures from across the globe (Michael. K. 2014). As a consequence, big cities become larger and become homes for people from many different cultures, with different beliefs and values. To explore the relationships and interactions between cities and their citizens, we need to have a cultural understanding of the society.

People who move across national and cultural boundaries never leave their old lives behind; they are often moving their personal values, experiences and beliefs together (Wim Kratsborn & Öcel, 2008). Today, cultural diversity is a phenomenon occurring in every city around the world. It is a guard against absolutism, a mode of existence that enhances the human experience, a mirror that helps us get a clearer view of our own culture by providing other viewpoints in contrary to our own (B.Parekh 2006). Cultural diversity is also a primary generator of urban vitality because it increases interactions among multiple urban components (Talen. E. 2008). The arrival of new people and migrant groups in the city potentially renews its lifeblood, because new arrivers normally see the city differently (Keith, 2014). However, without the goodwill and participation of the major culture, the minor cultures on their own would never be able to achieve a successful result of migrant integration (Francis Leo Collins, 2009).
Fig 4.2 Multicultural Harmony by children from Shalamar School

Photo source: Funkarchildart.com
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

New Zealand

In 1970s, the New Zealand government did discuss multiculturalism as a policy, but it was never implemented as it was in Canada and Australia. (Bromell. D. 2008),

During the 1990s, several thousand Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians flooded in from Asia after the failure of the American–supported governments in Indo–China. By the year 2006, another big wave of migrants had come in from Hong Kong, China, Korea, Japan, India and Sri Lanka (Murphy, 2008). Nowadays, Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the world’s most super-diverse societies which have one of fastest immigration population growth rates in the world; Auckland is considered more diverse than London or Sydney (Spoonley P, R Bedford, 2012). As most new migrants are essentially urban dwellers (Gordon. M 2008), compared with the rest of the country, the challenges of dealing with multicultural societies in the cities like Auckland are more intense due to this rapidly changing social landscape (Phillips. S. 2013). Auckland has changed dramatically in its demographics over the past two decades and will face a more diverse society in the near future. About 40 per cent of Auckland’s population is made up of immigrants from other countries including the Pacific Islands, China, Korea, the Philippines, and South Africa, and this number will continue to increase in the future (Spoonley P, R Bedford, 2012).

Aucklanders seem to be open to cultural diversity and are more supportive of settlement assistance for immigrants (Gendall, 2007), and the Auckland CBD could have significant potential to realise the benefits of intercultural mixing such as economic benefits (Francis Leo Collins, 2009). ‘Multicultural communities’ were part of the Auckland City Council’s promotion of ‘community well-being’ and planning initiatives with both explicit and implicit multicultural objectives (Francis Leo Collins, 2009). The Auckland Draft Unitary Plan indicated that one of the
critical disciplines of Auckland’s future urban development is the visibility of Auckland’s cultural diversity (Auckland Unitary Plan 2013).

Auckland is an open and welcoming city and society; it is the most important immigrant gateway city in New Zealand, which plays an active role in building independent, strong and inclusive communities. It develops plans and policies that promote a sense of belonging and engagement in the community by addressing community needs, supporting multicultural communities, and promoting a positive community spirit (ACC. 2006. Vol. 2). At the moment, lots of festivals and events have taken place to implicate some of the above polices, such as the Lantern Festival in Albert Park, the Pasifika Festival at Western Springs, the Hindu Diwali Festival of Lights at the Viaduct Harbour, and events such as the Chinese New Year celebrations and Whau Multicultural Festival at New Lynn Community Centre.
Challenge of cultural diversity

In this new century, we are facing a different kind of threat to multiculturalism. Cultural misunderstanding can escalate into real social problems, which will threaten the surrounding neighbourhoods (Setha L, Dana T and Suzanne S, 2005). Cultural diversity can accelerate the diffusion of one culture into another (Qadeer, 1997b). Some people argue that multiculturalism contributes to segregation and the fragmentation of societies, and does not lead to minority integration (Peter. K. 2011). Sharing places with others is not something that is always easy; it inevitably involves varying levels of discomfort. Diversity comes with many difficulties, language barriers, social tension, and civil disengagement. Lack of voice from minority ethnic groups, and low levels of interaction, make newcomers much harder to blend into the existing community. There are mismatched expectations around everyday social rituals (Wise. A, 2010).

Diverse communities and neighbourhoods have significantly less social abilities than culturally homogeneous ones because people in diverse communities tend to “hunker down” and isolate themselves from their neighbours (Knapp, C. 2009). A number of global incidents illustrate how significant those issues are. One of the notable incidents is the recent Boston bombings of April 15, 2013 (The Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper states that the Boston bombings happened because of “someone who feels completely excluded by society”) (Goodman. L. A, 2013). We must recognize that racial and ethnic tension threats can tear apart our communities (Berry, Anderson, Carl A. 2004) and those incidents remind us that we have to deal with the issue of diversity effectively, ensuring equality and reducing disparities between minority and majority communities. Accommodating different cultural values and beliefs is necessary in any given community (Singham, 2006).
New Zealand:

There are two major concerns about cultural diversities in New Zealand society. With the increasing engagement with Asian and other popular cultures and practice, the first debate arises in terms of New Zealand national identity and self-perception. How can we maintain the New Zealand national cultural identity when the number of newcomers keeps increasing? (Jaffe, 2013).

There are crude comments about the number of Asians on Queen Street and the illegible foreign signage on many main roads. Native New Zealand people express their concerns that the cultural identity of Auckland might be lost in its transition process. The second concern is whether the cultural diversity will have a negative influence on maintaining the inherited system of government to all citizens’ expectations (Durie. J 2005).
Multiculturalism in urban landscape

Culture is extremely powerful, as it determines people’s values and desires, and steers our actions by way of ideas or desires. To improve the lives of local residents, increasing cultural diversity is important because it provides the ecological advantage of different orientations, and the aesthetic sense to experience different worldviews and ways of thinking. The possibility of confrontation between cultures would generate new cultural processes (Setha Low, 2005).

Most contemporary cities in the world are diversified by multiculturalism in terms of structures, built forms and functions. Every detail of urban life can be promoted by cultural diversity. In a culturally diverse neighbourhood, divergent sets of landscape design and arrangement are required to accommodate the needs and cultural values of these divergent groups (Underhill & Valla, 2005).

Cultural diversity plays an important role in the urban landscape (Qadeer, M. 1997). Urban landscapes normally reflect and represent cultural and personal values (Rishbeth. C. 2004). In certain circumstances, when the cultural mix of an area changes, the community structures will change, the signage, street front, building style and even the landform will change together. Cultural diversity transforms the urban structures and landscape re-enforces the dynamics of containment. Undoubtedly, these transformation processes significantly influence the quality of urban life; there are French neighbourhoods, Indian bazaars, Korean churches, Chinatowns, mosques and temples. Each cultural group has carved a space for themselves and their cultural life is imprinted on the metropolitan landscapes (Qadeer. 1997a). Cultural representation and

“The investigation into the meaning of public spaces provides insight into the extent to which public spaces can play a positive role in processes of social integration” (Peter. K. 2011)
the patterns of use in any culturally diverse context are the key elements used to foster
the social sustainability and integration of our diverse communities, and promoting social
tolerance has become increasingly important. The inclusion of local communities and their
cultural values ultimately strengthens long-term social sustainability (Setha Low, 2005).
However the design for ever-growing multicultural communities in global super cities
would be one of the biggest challenges for landscape architects and policy makers this
century (Liu Binyi, 2014).
4.3 Social integration

Interactions certainly create pleasure and public sociability, and enable citizens to develop social networks that are sustained by trust (Peter. K. 2011).

Integration is a long-term challenge, as some ethnic groups will keep some of their distinctiveness as long as they can. This means adjusting to the rules and norms of a new society and for that society to learn to live with differences. So long as this adjustment or distinctiveness is transparent and takes place within the rule of law, it can add to the richness of the local society, rather than dilute it (Madanipour, 2010). To display itself in the public, the groups need become aware of it and to communicate with others. Good quality public spaces would facilitate this adjustment and enable some distinctions to be displayed in public (Madanipour, 2010).

Public spaces not only provide a place for public gatherings, but they also provide opportunities to interact with both strangers and acquaintances, and to understand our position in the social world. Those social bonds we developed in public spaces provide a sense of belonging and security (Anthony M. Orum, 2009).
4.4 Public place / Third space

Contemporary phenomena of mobility, a new conception of space, and transformation in information and communication, all contribute to the reshaping of the relationships between ethnic groups and interrogating the notion of public space (Saitta, 2012). Public places remain vital in the lives of people (Dithsimon, 2008). The quality of urban life is commonly measured by the quality of the public spaces; public spaces are a fundamental feature of cities. Ideally, public places are accessible to everybody and where differences are encountered and negotiated (Vicky Cattella, 2008).

A successful neighbourhood at peace is normally supported by a relaxing and fulfilling public life. In order to achieve this, the three realms of experience must be balanced. The first is domestic, the second is gainful or productive, and the third is inclusively sociable, offering both the basis of community and the celebration of it (Oldenburg, 1998). Public spaces are important social gathering places, and they can be a vehicle for multicultural interactions (Saitta, 2012). They can also be the key to investigating the relationship of culture and landscape, as Ray Oldenburg argued that space and place serves as a substrate of culture (Oldenburg, 2009). They can be a significant asset in bringing people together and even improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood (Saitta, 2012). A safe spatially adequate space for everyone can maintain the social interactions of diverse groups in cultural devise neighbourhoods (Setha Low, 2005).

The core settings of an informal public life can be restored to urban landscapes and established in daily life (Oldenburg, 1998). Public space includes all areas that are open and accessible to everyone in the society, where individuals and groups are free to come and go, and are free to

“These can only be, at best, very general criteria for defining what public space is, because public space is by its very nature contested, ambiguous, and uncertain.” (Anthony M. Orum, 2009).
use the space for its intended purpose. Such as parks, streets and sidewalks, public building like libraries, private buildings like shopping malls or restaurants. It is a place where people live their public lives. Public places provide a stage to interact with friends and strangers; the interactions we have with the strangers in public spaces helps us to understand the culture of “the others” as well as the culture of ourselves, our position in the world and how society expects us to act when we are “in public”. Public spaces can also be places for the user to affirm and express their own collective identities (Anthony M. Orum, 2009). It is important that the urban spaces where we can all come together are available for everyone to relax, learn, and recreate (Setha Low, 2005).

Public space - a place that a cultural conflict can be worked out in a safe and public forum - are vital settings for the fundamental social activity of a society (Setha Low, 2005). People show who they are and their identities through their dress, actions, language and behaviour when they present themselves in the public space. Even though people belong to different social categories based on religion, ethnicity, gender and so on, these identities can be influenced by others. Public spaces serve as contact zones where people encounter others and this is where people ‘consume’ the diversity, and being in the public space helps people become aware of other cultures. Urban public space is important for sharing and exposing cultural values, and by seeing others in public spaces, people become more familiar with the rules and models of engagement that are used in public spaces (Peter. K. 2011). Social interactions in public spaces are important because people can become more familiar and may create a more realistic image of other people by meeting other people with whom they would otherwise not interact. This can help us to be influenced less by stereotypes and build more realistic images of others, images that are based on real everyday life experiences (Peter. K. 2011).

A Dutch research study demonstrated that, “by having fleeting encounters, people become familiar with other cultures, resulting in a situation in which residents become aware of diversity, and acknowledge and accept diversity as something that is part of their everyday life. Especially by enjoying the diversity and having positive emotions during brief interactions, people appreciate their everyday multi-ethnic lives. At the same time residents, to a certain extent, also categorise others on the basis of visible ethnic characteristics.” (Peter. K. 2011).

People need to have the ownership of the public space for them, public spaces should be designed and managed for all the cultural groups in the sociality, it is not exclusively for one or two major groups. It should accommodate all users and encourage visitation from diverse groups of people (Setha Low, 2005). Public spaces should be inclusive spaces and user friendly for a wide range of people regardless of their social, racial and ethnic background. These spaces should be highly flexible, allowing multiple uses for a variety of purposes in different time settings (Saitta, 2012).
The most successful multicultural public spaces are not necessarily the ones with the snazziest physical design or the most amenities. More important is the creation of a space where people’s identities are affirmed and where people feel they can use the space without feeling conspicuous or looked down upon by people of different cultural groups. In short, a ‘successful’ multicultural environment is one where various group’s sense of comfort is combined with good physical design to create an atmosphere that can nurture many preferences; a place that fosters social interaction while simultaneously creating distinct “spaces” where individual cultures can be emphasized and celebrated (Knapp, C. 2009).

“We need to see the differences on the streets or in the other people, neither as threats nor as sentimental invitations, rather as necessary visions. They are necessary for us to learn how to navigate life with balance, both individually and collectively.” (Sennett, 1991)

If public spaces were designed to welcome everyone, then they can bring together groups of people regardless of their class, ethnic origin, gender or age, which makes intermingling possible (Peter. K. 2011). When public spaces are successful, they will increase opportunities to participate in communal activities. This fellowship in the open nurtures the growth of public life, which is stunted by the social isolation of ghettos and suburbs. In the parks, plazas, markets, waterfronts, and natural areas of our cities, people from different cultural groups can come together in a supportive context of mutual enjoyment. As these experiences are repeated, public spaces become vessels for carrying positive communal meanings (Stephen Carr, 1993).

“Public spaces are fundamental features of cities. They represent sites of sociability and face-to-face interactions, and at the same time their quality is commonly perceived to be a measure of the quality of urban life.” (Dines, 2006).

Public spaces are containers of human activity which can contribute to meeting the needs for security, identity, and a sense of place (Vicky Cattella, 2008). Formal and informal interactions in public places give people a sense of what is going on in their neighbourhood. Residents develop a sense of being at home in the streets, parks and other public spaces by being able
to understand what is going on in these places. Public spaces have the potential to enable us to understand social plurality and thereby foster tolerance between different cultural backgrounds. (Saitta, 2012).

Normally new public spaces are emerging from a previous non-existent location. When we redesign it, we need to understand the new ways, such places are actually used, we need to have an insight not only into the social activities of people, but also into their cultures (Anthony M. Orum, 2009).

Public spaces should be carefully designed, developed and maintained in accordance with local conditions and the actual needs of each and every local community in order to emphasise its potential for fostering community social cohesion (Saitta, 2012). Facilitating social cohesion in multicultural neighbourhoods is a complex issue involving a wide range of factors. Having successful local public spaces represents just one dimension. However, they represent a positive step forward no matter how small their influence in the total process of social integration (Saitta, 2012).
“Third places exist on neutral ground and serve to level their guests to a condition of social equality. Within these places, conversation is the main activity and the major vehicle for the display and appreciation of human personality and individuality. Third places are taken for granted and most have a low profile.” (Oldenburg, 1998).

The third place

The third place is our social surroundings beyond the first place - home where we live, and the second place - the workplace. In his book, “The Great Good Place”, Ray Oldenburg argues that the roles we play in third places provide us with our more sustaining matrices of human association; these tend to submerge personality and the inherent joys of being together with others to some external purpose. “This unique occasion provides the most democratic experience people can have and allows them to be more fully themselves, for it is salutary in such situations that all shed their social uniforms and insignia and reveal more of what lies beneath or beyond them.” (Oldenburg, 1998).

Oldenburg suggests the following characteristics define the third place:

- The third place is a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work (Oldenburg, 1998), it is the core setting of informal public life; it is the location of culture (Oldenburg, 2009).
- The third place is a space available where people can go whenever they feel loneliness or boredom.
- The third place is a place where the pressures and frustrations of the day call for relaxation amid good company, it is a place people escape to find relief from stress.
- The third place is a gathering place where community is most alive and people are most themselves.
• The third place is a leveller. A place that is a leveller is, by its nature, an inclusive place.
• The purpose of the third place is upbeat, it is cheerful. To enjoy the company of one’s fellow human beings and to delight in the novelty of their character.

In third places, there must be neutral ground upon which people may gather. There must be places where individuals may come and go as they please, in which no one is required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable if there is no neutral ground provided where people live, neighbours will never meet, let alone associate with each other (Oldenburg, 1998).

In third places, conversation is the main activity. A comparison of cultures readily reveals that the popularity of conversation in a society is closely related to the popularity of third places. Conversation’s improved quality within the third place is also suggested by its temper. The game is conversation and the third place is its home court (Oldenburg, 2009).

Third places are not a substitute for home. The general settings of third places are different from the home, however, it is very similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support that is extended; it’s a place like a warm home where people can relax be refreshed and regenerated. Such are the characteristics of third places that appear to be universal and essential to a vital informal public life (Oldenburg, 2009).
5.0 DESIGN PRECEDENTS

5.1 Case studies
The Lambton Multicultural Garden

Established in Jul 2009 at Lambton, NSW, Australia. The garden focuses on one of the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre objectives, to promote social and educational interaction among people of diverse backgrounds by providing a pleasant, informal, non-sectarian, non-political atmosphere at the Centre.

The Multicultural Community Garden involves volunteers from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds working together.

The project helps the community to get together and develop tolerance and acceptance of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This group of community gardeners often gets together for morning tea and participates in cooking demonstrations or exchanging recipes from different cultures.

New gardeners are encouraged to become involved whether you are native or new to the country. Breaking down the language barriers and involving New Australians and their cultural heritage provides many interesting foods to eat.

Superkilen celebrates diversity in Copenhagen

Superkilen is a kilometre-long park situated in the Nørrebro area just north of Copenhagen’s city centre. Superkilen is home to more than 60 nationalities, and is considered to be one of the most ethnically diverse and socially challenged neighbourhoods in the Danish capital. The park aims to support the diversity of local inhabitants by using globally found objects, which symbolise the home countries of those who live in the area. The objects include neon signs from Qatar and Russia, bollards from Ghana, an imposing sculpture of a bull from Spain and Palestinian soil. It is a world exhibition within the space of just half a mile.

The park presents itself as a gigantic exhibition of urban elements; each object has a small stainless steel plate mounted in the ground bearing a description of the object in Danish and in the language of the respective country of origin. The surrealist collection of global urban diversity that can be found here reflects the true mix of the local residents, rather than depicting an outdated image of a homogeneous Denmark.

The park is comprised of three areas: the ‘Red Square’, the ‘Black Market’ and the ‘Green Park’. A red carpet covers the entire red square, the lines and edges creating a big red pattern. Entered from Nørrebrogade, the square is an open space, serving as an extension to the activities in the nearby hall. The Black Market is where the locals meet. There are benches and barbeque facilities, tables for playing backgammon and chess, and a Japanese octopus playground. And the Green Park attracts people for picnics, sunbathing.

Albany Park Multicultural Sculpture Park and Healing Garden - Proposed

Albany Park’s Sculpture and Healing Garden will be located to west of and along the north branch of the Chicago River, north of Lawrence Avenue. The public space serves as a gateway to Albany Park, while also being accessible to surrounding neighborhoods and visitors. As the park plan unfolds in phases over the next few years, the planning stands out as a process in which resident culture is integral, the space is managed and designed by locals, and planned elements of health and well being are intentional.

The concept for the Multicultural Sculpture Park and Healing Garden began in 2006 as residents voiced a desire for more quality parks in their community, among many topics that emerged as part of the residents’ vision for their community. The desire for a healing garden to help local refugees from war-torn countries received resounding support and residents, local organisations and institutions have been directing their community efforts into a plan to revamp the currently underutilised open space into a culturally rich and thoughtfully designed healing garden and park.

The creation of the garden and its on-going development and programming will be a community-wide effort to promote well being and strength in the community.

The art installations, created by local artists to reflect the culture and community of the residents, are one of several enhancements that will realise the vision of the Multicultural Sculpture Park and Healing Garden.
Albany Park sees the garden creation as an opportunity to not only enhance park space, but to embrace the experience of its community members and celebrate their differences. It is known as one of the nation’s most diverse communities where over 40 languages are spoken.

Albany Park has historically served as an entry point for immigrants and refugees from Asia, Central America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. While each group’s story is unique, the healing garden as a place that will “help bring unity, peace, and harmony to the community.”

In the same way the park elements are intended to promote cultural connection, they are also tools for economic development. As the enhanced public space gains leverage as a cultural hub, it has the potential to attract more outside visitors and impact the community economically. The park will not only provide residents with an environment to enjoy, but the park activities can help surrounding local businesses grow.

Multicultural Community Gardens

Multicultural Community Gardens are part of a local urban agricultural initiative that is creating inclusive community gardening spaces in the Waterloo Region, Canada.

The gardens value and promote local food security and food sovereignty for the Waterloo Region and increase the cultural diversity of locally grown fruits and vegetables.

The Multicultural Community Gardens Project supported by the Diggables Collaborative that explored creating community gardening spaces in the Waterloo Region that would engage immigrant families.

The Multicultural Community Gardens project has also been supported by a large collaborative of partners and the gardens are sustained by a growing diverse group of local gardeners that bring gardening practices from various cultures around the world.

Source:http://www.multiculturalgardenskw.org/about-us.html
Multicultural park

A multicultural, global garden has been developed at this charming park, which includes a tot lot and picnic tables. The Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (FC/ASLA) recognized the Multicultural Park in 2002 with an Award of Honor. Different cultural backgrounds of the Park East community were incorporated into the design by using plant material indigenous to the home lands of the neighborhood’s residents and artwork created by neighborhood school children and local artist Beth Ravitz. Colorful artwork can be seen on entrance columns and the rear wall.

Source: http://www.wahlee.co.nz/Homepage.html
Hay Street

Hay Street is a street in the west of Sydney’s CBD, and its name comes from the famous Hay Market there, in the late 19th century. Sydney’s Chinatown began to establish itself near Hay Street and people then to translate the street names into Chinese. Now we have Hay Street and Xi Street here - similar pronunciations, but different meanings.

Xi means “happy” in Chinese; it represents the happiness that the new immigrations found in their new home when they settled here. One street sign with two interpretations represents all the history that has occurred in this place.
Wah Lees

Wah Lees, the first Oriental Market in Auckland. The store is owned by one of the four founding Chinese families in Auckland. Barry Wah Lee’s grandfather opened the store in about 1900 in the old Chinatown in Grey’s Ave, Wah Lee’s moved to Hobson St in 1966. Most Aucklanders associate the Wah Lee general store in Hobson St with fireworks for Guy Fawkes, this is one of the iconic stores representing the multicultural history of Auckland.

Source: http://www.wahlee.co.nz/Homepage.html
6.0 DESIGN APPROACH

6.1 Design philosophy
6.2 Design Principles
6.3 Neutral ground
6.4 Connection and multiculture connections
6.5 Togetherness
6.6 A home away from home
6.1 Design Philosophy:

Public places have significant potential for developing inter-ethnic understanding. People show who they are and their identities through their dress, actions, language and behaviour when they present themselves in public spaces. Even though people belong to different social categories based on religion, ethnicity, gender and so on, these identities can be influenced by others. Public spaces serve as contact zones where people encounter others and this is where people ‘consume’ the diversity, and being in public spaces helps people become aware of other cultures. Urban public space is important for sharing and exposing cultural values. By seeing the others in public spaces, people become more familiar with the rules and models of engagement that are used in public spaces (Peter. K. 2011).

Multicultural integration relates to issues of belonging and participation, rather than to adaptation or assimilation (Liu Binyi, 2014). I believe that multicultural social integration is not only about native residents adapting themselves to ever changing society or non-native residents adapting into the cultural domain, it is more about the extent to which people from various backgrounds live together and feel at home in their neighbourhood.

Under the multiple cultural themes, rather than seeking to recreate a particular foreign landscape or a public place from another part of the world in Cook Street west, the strategies for the renovation of Cook Street west should reflect the multiple needs of its residents and their multiple cultural preferences. It would be a unifying force for the multicultural communities in Cook Street west, and hold the potential for ongoing adaptation while providing other people such as visitors who are also using the place with opportunities for cultural learning and exchanges that enrich all.
6.2 Design Principles:

The concept of culture provides clues to the presence and dynamics of cultural diversity in Cook Street west.

Currently, at Cook Street west there is a limited cross-cultural exchange at the personal or neighbourhood level. The concept design for Cook Street west seeks to build on the strengths of the existing sites in location and their urban character whilst infusing a softer, greener public space overlay that helps to build inter-ethnic understanding within the neighbourhood as well as invites visitors to stop and enjoy the vibrant urban life that Auckland can offer.

Cook Street west is located at the entrance to Auckland CBD and has a distinctive civic character. During the 1990s, it was designed as a motorway extension to stream heavy traffic flows entering and exiting the CBD. Currently, very limited open/public spaces are provided for the residents living here.

Cook Street west is one of the densest residential precincts in the city centre. There are number of high-rise residential apartments here that are home for many residents coming from different parts of the world, as well as more apartments under construction or in the planning phase. The pedestrian access is somewhat limited due to the character of the streets; however, there is also a heavy pedestrian flow during the peaking hours. In this respect, improving the quality of open/public spaces presented here provides an invaluable opportunity to meet the needs of a very large number of the population.
Based on the understanding of its people and places from the site investigation and the strategic research of multiculturalism, public/third spaces and the social integration between them, the proposed design principles have been developed to guide the overall design renovations.

The principles fall into five general categories:

**Social & cultural sustainability**

*New public spaces should be designed in accordance with social & cultural sustainability principles to reduce the social isolation for newcomers. The urban living quality would be significantly improved through retrofitting with the integration of “Third space”.*

- Socially cohesive public spaces need to be introduced and enhanced to accommodate the diverse cultures and gain advantage as a cultural hub.
- There should be enhancement of footpath, and street connections, as well as existing or purposed public/third spaces for recreation and access.
- Landscaping on Cook Street west should focus on both native and exotic plant species that will enhance the character of the site and surrounding areas.

**Fit for Purpose**

*Historical ad-hoc development and infrastructure use has resulted in a “motorway extension” situation at Cook Street west whereby infrastructure is frequently not fit for its current purpose.*

- Design intervention should consider the needs of the existing culturally diverse residential population and the future development within the site and the surrounding area, such as the two additional apartment blocks along Nelson Street and the international convention center near SkyCity. Providing more street furniture (such as seats and bike racks) to accommodate the need of the growing residential population.
- There is possibility to adapt, reuse and upgrade the existing facilities, such as the massive car park area within the site, so they can be more efficiently used by the various communities living on the site.

**Identity**

*To develop culturally rich and creative, international destination - a showcase of New Zealand’s unique multicultural neighbourhood.*

- To provide public/third places regardless of any cultural background – a neutral ground to improve the overall living and working environment.
To develop the base as a ‘good multicultural neighbourhood’ with the potential of inviting and helping other people such as visitors to understand the cultural values with which they are not familiar.

To improve connectivity within the site and the surrounding areas and find ways to create a sense of place, giving it a global identity and unifying its inhabitants.

Integration & Engagement

*The everyday language of integration and engagement.*

- The design renovations would contribute positively and proactively to the local environment and adapt culture perspectives to help make the neighbourhood more inviting and vibrant.

- Create an environment with a sense of ownership for users and residents. This would encourage newcomers to express their core traditions to create room for culture integration and open for further reflection.

- As many residents I have interviewed have a deep connection with their homeland landscape, the design renovations would incorporate some natural elements that echo home patterns.
Legibility & Safety

The existing “third space” is missing and the footpaths are poorly laid out due to the old purpose of the Cook Street west.

- Incorporate Auckland City Council’s future street plan in the design renovations and enhance the pedestrian ownership of the street. In addition, a shared street would be considered to link Cook Street and Union Street.

- Signs in both English and another language would not bring much comfort as the migrants are not necessarily literate in English or any other language.

- The role of signs in the identification of places, buildings and businesses is recognised and provided for. Clear creative signs would be good street rule guide providing information to help people, especially the new comers, with finding their way as well as a guide for road sharing for pedestrians, cyclists and traffic.

- Maximising the number of access points to the neighbourhood and identifying them clearly will improve the accessibility and security of the Cook Street west.
Development Opportunities

The following list of development opportunities has been developed in conjunction with the Design Philosophy and the Design Principles listed above.

The concept fundamentally depends on each of these elements. It helps to answer the research question of how urban design practice can accommodate and enhance the intersection of diverse culture in public/third spaces, and contribute positively to the social exchange within diverse communities.

The concept was derived following careful observation of existing precedents, and it has been divided into four Strategies:
Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape

Integration strategy: Togetherness

Community space strategy: A home away from home

Movement strategy: Connection and Multicultural connection

Public/open space Strategy: Neutral ground

Figure 6.1 Development Opportunities Diagram

Not to Scale
6.3 Public/open space Strategy:

Neutral ground

Public places can host various activities, promote a sense of community and help to develop and maintain cohesive social relationships (Saitta, 2012).

Public space – a neutral ground provides an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other people (Gregory. D. 2008), it has great potential to enable us to understand social plurality and thereby foster tolerance between different cultural backgrounds. (Saitta, 2012).

Regardless of their cultural background, most people I have interviewed suggest that improving the functions and amenities of the public spaces would be the key to improving the living environment at Cook Street west. A few of them mentioned to me that due to busy lifestyles nowadays, most of them couldn’t go too far away to use Victoria Park or have a break at the waterfront during their everyday life. The travel distance and time is critically important; a public space where they can rest, relax, and meet other people in the neighbourhood who would otherwise not intersect should be available for them a footstep away when they need it.

However, due to the existing situation in Cook Street west, apparently there are only very limited natural resources for improving the existing public spaces.

Limiting the supply of on-site parking was asked about in the Auckland Unitary Plan and improving the pedestrian and cycling environment by reducing the car use, especially in the Auckland CBD, is the goal of Auckland City Council’s future Cook Street west transformational plan.

In response to that, I am proposing to convert some of the existing parking spaces into a park; a park can be shared by people and cars. The scenario is to convert those inactive car-only spaces into a recreational green space, which would serve as a neutral ground that neighbours could meet and gather.

Two types of “neutral grounds” would be applied.
The first is the recreational neutral ground – a parking park around the Placemakers area. At the moment the only purpose of this area is to park cars; this area is a dead space connecting to nowhere.

By converting it into a parking park, people in the neighbourhood would use it as a park after work and during the weekend.

Grass parking technology would apply here to maximize the green and increase the flexibility of using the space. Also, the car park scheme would be a change from the existing 24 hours weekdays and weekends, to 10am – 3pm Mon-Fri. During the day, the place serves as a car park, and after working hours and during the weekends, the place would be occupied by the community.

Cultural and social sustainability would be achieved here not only by providing the neutral ground where the community’s diverse character can be active and celebrated in the public, but also the engagement with exotic plants and elements would comfort the newcomers in the neighbourhood and help them smoothly through the adoption process by associating their past in their new community.
Figure 6.2  Recreational Neutral Ground - Proposed Parking Park

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

- Green walking path connect to the surrounding neighborhood
- Table and seats
- Cultural Landmark specimen tree
- Zig zag Cultural footpath
- Potential areas for cultural art display
Figure 6.3  Recreational Neutral Ground - Proposed Parking Park
EXISTING VIEW
Not to Scale
Figure 6.4  Recreational Neutral Ground - Proposed Parking Park
PLAN VIEW
Not to Scale
The second “neutral ground” is the shop and business front parking parks.

This design concept is aimed to encourage and integrate landscape design, enhancing the existing development to achieve a great variety and amenity at pedestrian level.

By removing the existing carparks at the shop front, the shops would be more inviting and become more accessible and approachable. This would help the shop owner to attract more customers.

As the site investigation revealed, most shops in Cook Street west have a distinctive cultural character, and some of them have signs written in other languages (other than English). The pocket park in front of each shop should be designed to extend this character of the shop by encouraging shop owners to display associated cultural elements and use culturally orientated furniture to express their identity and serve as a cultural hub. This would provide neutral ground to help the other neighbours living here to understand the cultural values with which they are not familiar.

Also the shop front pocket park would solve the puzzle of the lack of basic street furniture in Cook Street west. Seats and vegetation in the pocket
parks would provide a neutral ground to increase the sociability of the neighbourhood as well as increase face to face interactions between the people.

Various shop front pocket parks along each street would contribute positively and proactively to the whole neighbourhood and surrounding areas. Adapting cultural perspectives into the shop front pocket park design helps make the streetscape more inviting and vibrant as well as enhancing the walking and cycling experience along the street.
The public realm also has a vital role to play in creating an opportunity for “meeting of people” to take place. Public places/Third places furnish a way for users to affirm and express their own collective identities; it would be an important arena where ethnic diversity is negotiated and experienced (Vicky Cattella, 2008).

6.4 Movement Strategy:

Connection and multicultural connection

1. Improve connectivity within the site and the surrounding area to connect neighbourhoods with wider context street elements.

2. Upgrade the existing streets and footpaths to an appropriate standard for a relatively high use urban area. More street trees would be planted on each of the perimeter streets to provide better shuttles.

3. Introduce a cycleway along Nelson Street and Cook Street to connect the existing cycleway network and the proposed Auckland City Council’s cycleway network.

4. Introduce bus stop pocket parks to improve the existing poor bus stop situation, which would encourage residents to use more public transport.

5. Introduce a pedestrian express walking path across the whole neighbourhood, reduce the waiting time at the traffic lights, improve the existing walking experience and make the road safer for the pedestrians.

6. Introduce street walking park along Cook Street to change the existing neighbourhood character of the cars and concrete occupied “motorway extension” to a pedestrian and greenery dominated “multicultural neighbourhood”.
Figure 6.12   Movement Strategy
KEY DIAGRAM
1:8000@A4
Cook Street west used to be one of the busiest streets in the CBD, it connected the car travellers from SH1 to SH16, which resulted in roads that were designed to stream heavy car traffic. The carriageway of this portion is around 20m wide with seven lanes and the footpath beside it which is less than 1m wide.

Due to the changed motorway layout a couple years ago, the connections were rearranged and car travellers don’t need to get off the motorway at Cook Street anymore, so the traffic volume in Cook Street west is dramatically reduced.

The street design needs to fit its current propose, with the rapid population growth rates in Cook Street west, this portion of the road would change from seven lanes to three lanes, which creates an opportunity to fit a 12m wide middle road park here to be used by residents, visitors and cyclists.

This park would connect the apartment residents to the new city works and the proposed parking park near Placemakers, it would also link to Victoria Park and Viaduct Harbour.
Figure 6.14 Movement Strategy

PROPOSED STREET WALKING PARK - PLAN VIEW
Not to Scale
DESIGN APPROACH

Figure 6.15  Movement Strategy
PROPOSED STREET WALKING PARK - EXISTING VIEW
1:1000@A4
Figure 6.17 Movement Strategy
PROPOSED STREET WALKING PARK - ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW
Not to Scale
6.5 Community space / Third space strategy:

A home away from home

Most Cook Street west residents are living in the apartment blocks, each of them home for at least 1000 people. In a way, we can see those apartment complexes as small communities.

A Japanese man described his living experience in his apartment for the last two years during the interview. “No, I normally go straight to my room when I enter the building...I think my neighbours are two girls, sometimes I meet them in the elevator, but I’m not sure in which room they live…”

Most old apartment developments in Cook Street west such as Zest or Hobson Gardens don’t have community spaces for their residents, compared with newly proposed apartment complexes, which include community spaces for the neighbours in their plan. Without such a community space, social integrations aren’t able to take place. This results in social isolation among the neighbours. Interview revealed that there are barely any social interactions between the neighbours. The residents feel less attached to their neighbourhood.

Due to the existing nature of most of the apartments, a productive community garden could be introduced to deal with the existing situation; this could be retrofitted to the existing buildings to promote social interaction in this diverse neighbourhood and to achieve a sense of the togetherness.

The third space is not a substitute for home; the general settings of third places are different from the home. However, it is very similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support.
that is extended. It is a place like a warm home where people can relax, refresh themselves and be regenerated. Such are the characteristics of third places that appear to be universal and essential to a vital informal public life.

The community park forms the recreational, social and cultural heart of the apartment complexes. It would be used by the apartment residents and the friends they invite, and would allow for cultural expression through events and ceremonial use of the facilities. It is a good ground design to serve as a third place.

Movable public furniture would be provided here such as seats and tables to allow people to have a DIY meeting spot. This would provide a pleasant, informal atmosphere to maximize the psychological comfort and contribute to “a warm home” feeling when people relax with their friends here.
Figure 6.21  Community space / Third space strategy
PROPOSED COMMUNITY GARDEN - EXISTING VIEW
Not to Scale
A few look out points would reveal Auckland’s distinctive landform. This unique urban location will help residents, especially the newcomers understand Auckland and its distinctive volcanic geographic features.

The management and maintenance of these spaces would be carried out with engagement from the apartment residents to help create a sense of ownership.
6.6 Integration strategy:

Togetherness

Symbolic ways of communicating cultural meaning are an important dimension of place attachment that would be fostered to promote cultural diversity.

As shown in case studies, the multi-language sign in Sydney plays a significant role in communication in the cultural scene.

The multi-language street signs are used in many countries; this is very common for the names of major world cities. In some regions, places and streets have names in all local languages.

The street name normally holds historical meaning; multi-language street sign can enrich those meanings and become a bridge across cultures.

In Cook Street west, we can translate our street names into multi-languages including Maori. For example, the name Cook Street is in the memory of Captain Cook. With the new translation, the newcomer will carry the legend of Captain Cook and add a new story to this land. Those little changes would be positive icons that promote interactions in this culturally devise neighbourhood. Those signs communicate a shared identity to the residents in the Cook Street west neighbourhood as well as to strangers.
Figure 6.25 Integration strategy
PROPOSED MULTI-LANGUAGE SIGN IN AUCKLAND

Tāmaki Makaurau
オークランド
オクラント
Oklavnt
オクラント
Oklavnt
オークランド
オクラント
Tāmaki Makaurau

PROPOSED MULTI-LANGUAGE SIGN IN AUCKLAND
They may also act as a message board for welcoming with strangers of different identities. As Cook Street west is a neighbourhood with so many people living together with different cultural preferences, translating street signs into multiple languages would manufacture an authentic experience of the public space that residents and visitors will understand and find accessible.

The translation process would be done with the engagement of the local residents. A display board would be placed in the public, which would be accessed by everyone in the local area, and people would add their own translation to the board. This board would be temporary, but the best translation of the board would be selected and displayed with the vote of the locals. This helps to create a sense of togetherness. This not only leads to improvement in the physical environment, but it can also help to develop social capital in a neighbourhood.
Figure 6.26 Integration strategy

PROPOSED TRANSLATION DISPLAY BOARD

Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape

6.6
Conclusion:

Research question:
How can urban design practice accommodate and enhance the interaction of diverse culture in the public/third spaces at Cook street west, and contribute positively to the social exchange within diverse communities?

Research:
This research set out to explore the linkage between multicultural values, social sustainability and public places, and to identify the opportunities and challenges of how multicultural values can be integrated and used in urban design practice. It also investigated how urban public places can be designed and managed to foster positive community relations, and promote interactions in an ethno-cultural neighbourhood.

The site:
Cook Street west, situated in the west of the Auckland CBD, was selected as my research site. It hosts the most dense and diverse population in Auckland. The site is about 20 ha and is situated in an important location - the entrance to the Auckland CBD where people get their first impression of the Auckland CBD when they arrive from the airport or south of Auckland. Due to the traffic volume, the streets’ activities in this area are extremely limited to local residents and this area is isolated by major arterial roads. This area has a unique texture and is highly idiosyncratic in Auckland.

Sixty six per cent of the population in Cooks Street West comes from overseas, most of them are
new immigrants from Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands. The population in this area has increased dramatically over the last two decades, and this increase has been largely driven by the new immigrants, international students, and visitors. With more new apartments rising, this number will continue to grow. Compared with rural areas, social tensions between new immigrants, local working residents, and students are more intense across the Auckland CBD. Due to lack of communities, CBD residents are housed in multi-unit apartments. Distances between ‘inner city’ neighbourhoods are further away than in suburban areas. Therefore, there is a very common feeling among inner city residents that they are out of place, and they don’t belong in the place. (Collins.F.L 2010).

The Auckland City Council’s City Centre Masterplan has revealed that in the future vision for Cook Street west, designated streets will provide a pleasant, safe and comfortable neighbourhood that is resident friendly, culturally rich and creatively attractive.

**Site investigation:**
Participant interviews and non-participant observations were carried out for the site investigation to gain insight into the relationships between the public spaces and social integration in Cook Street west.

Observational and phenomenological approaches were employed to ensure a full multidimensional picture of the subject of investigation was drawn. Non-participant site observations were carried out for a period of 12 months from December 2013 to November 2014, and the interviews were conducted between January 2014, and July 2014, Two types of interviews were used during the survey, face-to-face and cloud interviews.

The interviews were designed to investigate the participants’ current public place experience and their overall insights, opinions and expectations with regards to public places and their overall living environment.

The findings from the interviews and observations were analysed together under four categories: general activities, public places in Cook Street west, participants’ experience of using the public spaces in Cook Street west, and participants’ opinions and suggestions of improving the living environment in Cook Street west.

The findings confirmed that regardless of the ethnic association, public places are the key element to promoting social interactions among the diverse neighbourhood.

**Theoretical background:**
The theoretical framework for this research is underpinned by three key pillars, multicultural values, public spaces/third spaces and the social interaction between them.

‘Multicultural real’ exists in everyday interactions. Multiculturalism is the
recognition that cultures, modes of communication and group identification other than the dominant one, are worthy and deserve a certain autonomy; it is a process in which different cultures can engage with each other. The migrants in Cook Street west brought together cultures from across the globe. While being a positive force to renew the lifeblood in Cook Street west, cultural diversity here comes with lots of difficulties - language barriers, social tension, and low levels of interaction, make the neighbourhood much harder to blend together.

Social interactions need to be processed in a public place, where residents in Cook Street west would display themselves in the public, where they would become aware of the diversity and communicate with the others.

A good quality public space would facilitate this adjustment and enable some distinctions to be displayed in public (Ali. M. 2010). Public spaces have the potential to enable us to understand social plurality, and thereby foster tolerance between different cultural backgrounds.

Currently in Cook Street west, the public places are designed to fill the old purpose of this neighbourhood - a motorway extension, so it doesn’t meet the needs of the current residents and the proposed development of Cook Street west.

The proposed design interventions would respond to this transformation of the Cook Street west people’s needs over time by creating new types of public space to serve as contact zones where people encounter with others. This is where people ‘consume’ the diversity, a place where people would share and expose their cultural values.
Design precedents:
Selection of cases
The selection of cases was based on the following criteria:
- A space was designed to support and celebrate the community’s diverse ethnic background.
- A space that is not dominated by a specific group of user;
Five design cases, both local and international were selected, which varied in size and type in order to gain insight into the possible relevance of scale and facilities.

Design:
Five design principles were developed based on the site investigations, case studies and the strategic research of multiculturalism, public/third spaces and the social interactions between them.

Social & cultural sustainability
New public spaces should be designed in accordance with social and cultural sustainability principles to reduce the social isolation for newcomers. The urban living quality would be significantly improved through retrofitting with integration of “third space”.

Fit for Purpose
Historical ad-hoc development and infrastructure use has resulted in a “motorway extension” situation at Cook Street west, whereby infrastructure is frequently not fit for its current purpose.

Identity
Culturally rich and creative, an international destination, a showcase of New Zealand’s multicultural neighbourhoods.

Integration & Engagement
The everyday language of integration and engagement.

Legibility & Safety
The existing “third space” is missing and the footpaths are poorly laid out due to the old purpose of Cook Street west.
Based on those principles, four design strategies were carried out to answer the research question of how can urban design practice accommodate and enhance the interaction of diverse culture in the public/third spaces, and contribute positively to the social exchange within diverse communities.

Public/open space strategy:
Neutral ground
The scenario was to convert some inactive car-only spaces in Cook Street west into a recreational green space, to promote a sense of community and help to develop and maintain cohesive social relationships among the neighbours.
Two types of “neutral grounds” were introduced here:
The first is the recreational neutral grounds – a parking park around the Placemakers area.
By converting this into a parking park, people in the neighbourhood would use it as a park after work and during the weekend. Cultural and social sustainability would be achieved here not only by providing a neutral ground where the community’s diverse character can be active and celebrated in public, but also engagement with exotic plants and elements would comfort the newcomers to the neighbourhood and help to smooth the adoption process by associating their past in their new community.

The second “neutral ground” is the shop and business front parking parks.
This design concept is aimed to extend the distinctive characteristics of each shop along Cook Street west to the pedestrian level, by converting the carparks in front of each shop into a cultural hub pocket park. Culture-associated elements displayed here will help the shops to express their identity and serve as a cultural hub to enable us to understand social plurality and thereby foster tolerance between different cultural backgrounds.

Movement strategy:
Connection and multicultural connection
Under this strategy, a few scenarios were carried out.

Improve connectivity within the site and the surrounding areas to connect neighbourhoods with wider context street elements.
Overall footpath and cycleway improvement to adopt the proposed Auckland City Council cycleway development plan.
Upgrade the existing streets and footpaths to an appropriate standard for a relatively high use
urban area. More street trees would be planted on each of the perimeter streets to provide better shuttles.

Introduce a cycleway along Nelson Street and Cook Street to connect the existing cycleway network and the proposed Auckland City Council’s cycleway network.

Introduce bus stop pocket park to improve the existing poor bus stop situation, which would encourage residents to use more public transport.

Introduce a pedestrian express walking path crossing the whole neighbourhood, reduce the waiting time at the traffic lights, to improve the existing walking experience and make the road safer for the pedestrians.

Introduce a street walking park along Cook Street to change the neighbourhood character from the existing cars and concrete occupied “motorway extension” to a pedestrian and greenery dominated “multicultural neighbourhood”.

Community / Third space strategy:
A home away from home
Most Cook Street west residents are living in apartment blocks, each of which is a small community. However, most old apartment developments don’t have community space for its residents.

Due to the existing nature of most of the apartments, a productive community garden would be introduced to deal with the existing situation. This could be retrofitted to the existing buildings to promote social interaction in this diverse neighbourhood and achieve a sense of the togetherness.

This garden would form the recreational, social and cultural heart of the apartment complexes, which would provide a pleasant, informal atmosphere to maximise psychological comfort and contribute to “a warm home” feeling when people relax here with their friends.

The unique urban location of the garden reveals Auckland’s distinctive landform and this would help residents, especially the newcomers understand Auckland and its distinctive volcanic geographic features.

Integration strategy:
Sense of togetherness
In this scenario, multi language signs are used to communicate shared identities, which would be fostered to promote cultural diversity in Cook Street west.

The street name normally holds historical meaning and multi language street signs including Maori can enrich those meanings and become a bridge across cultures.

These signs would also act as a welcoming message to strangers of different identities. As Cook Street west is a neighbourhood with many people of different cultures living together, translating the street signs into multiple languages, helps to manufacture an authentic experience of the public spaces that residents and visitors will understand and find accessible.

This little change would be a positive icon that promotes interactions in this culturally diverse neighbourhood.
Conclusion:

As a new immigrant myself, my interest in cultural diversity was one of the main reasons I started this research. I found how people orientate themselves in public places - which is largely dependent on their cultural background - is very thought-provoking. It took me quite some time to narrow down my focus from the rather broad one of ‘ethnic diversity’ to a small community - Cook Street west, where I first settled when I arrived in New Zealand.

Conversations with the residents of the research site revealed that culture considerably influences people’s perception of public/third places and influences their preference patterns. A key insight generated from this research was that with the growing ethnic diversity of Auckland, especially the CBD area, the neighbourhoods become more complex and the residents of different cultural backgrounds have of variety of needs, expectations and preference of public spaces. The landscape design inventions need to adapt to these changes.

This research has conveyed the very real experience of multiculturalism in urban landscape, and that there are ways of respectfully approaching the multiple cultural perspectives in the ever-changing urban development. Social sustainability can be achieved in this culturally diverse neighbourhood – Cook Street west, by developing the urban spaces with more depth and variety to appeal to the diverse needs.

Incorporating cultural elements into the design of the public spaces from a variety of different cultures not only benefits the residents of Cook Street west, but also, by encouraging people to express their identities though the design of the public spaces, people share and expose their cultural values in public, which can benefit everyone in the community. By learning new ways to use and enjoy the places from each other, this would result in more vibrant and integrated communities.


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Site Observation notes:

Date: 2013-12-08
Time: 12:30pm-1:30pm
Weather: around 25 degrees in the sun and 20 degrees in the shade, sunny and windy
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately less than 1 min
Ethnic: mixed
Ages: most mid aged

Other findings:

1. People tend to ignore the traffic lights, they are crossing the street whenever they want and the cars have to slow down to avoid the pedestrians.
2. People gathering outside the doors.
3. Most working people using the streets walking to find lunch, and using open spaces for gathering, they wear business clothes.
4. Bus stops not clearly marked and provide poor shuttles, mother with 2 babies is worried and clearly not happy when waiting.
5. No bike racks provided, people lock their bikes on the street sign pole.
6. Poor pedestrian link, uncomfortable walking experience, footpath too narrow-less than 0.5m, cars speeding up off the highway.
Site Observation notes:

Date: 2014-01-15
Time: 6:00 - 7:00pm
Weather: around 25 degrees in the sun and 20 degrees in the shade
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately less than 1min
Ethnic: mixed, camera out of battery, no photos recorded
Ages: 15-60, no kids

Other findings:
1. Traffic jams everywhere, air pollution observed, walking experience not that great as too many cars around, the noise and people moving fast around me makes me feel uncomfortable while walking around.
2. People obey the traffic lights at most intersections, but they are also crossing without obeying the rules when the traffic is jammed.
3. Not many people gathering outside the doors.
4. Many people waiting outside bus stop. Unfortunately the bus stops in this area are not clearly marked and provide poor shuttles.
5. People playing ball outside of their doors in front of 88 Cook Street around 7pm
Appendix 1

Site Observation notes:

Date: 2014-03-17
Time: 1pm-2:30pm
Weather: around 33 degrees in the sun and 25 degrees in the shade, very hot
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately 1 min or more than 1min
Ethnic: mix
Ages: no kids, no older

Other findings:

1. Students are back in town, many of them gathered outside of their schools.
2. Streets are busier than 2 months before.
3. People with bikes and standing electric scooters appear more around the site.
4. Very hot, but still many people sit in the sun.
5. Sun melts me down.


Appendix 1

Site Observation notes:

Date: 2014-05-25
Time: 7pm-7:30pm
Weather: around 15 degrees, cold at night
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately 1 min or more than 1min
Ethnic: mix
Ages: kids with their parents.

Other findings:

1. People playing on the street after work
2. People ignore the traffic, they are cross the street when they want.
3. Traffic jams everywhere
4. Mother with 3 kids unhappily waiting at the bus stop due to no seats provided here.
Site Observation notes:

Date: 2014-08-22  
Time: 1pm-1:30pm  
Weather: around 12 degrees, cold  
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately 1 min  
Ethnic: mix  
Ages: kids with their parents

Other findings:

1. Nobody walking on Cook Street west except me in the cold rain.
2. Due to the weather, not many people walking around
Site observation 140822 | 13:00 - 13.30 PM

Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape
Appendix 1

Site Observation notes:

Date: 2014-11-20
Time: 9:45-10:30am
Weather: around 22 degrees in the sun and 15 degrees in the shade
Traffic lights: waiting time for pedestrian is approximately 0.5 min or no more than 1min
Ethnic: mix
Ages: saw one kids walking by herself, most mid age

Other findings:
1. Early spring, beautiful street trees and clear air in the morning.
2. The streets are busy in the morning.
3. People walking fast in the morning
4. Some people chatting in groups
5. People sun bathe in front of the doorway, some by themselves, some in groups.
Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape

Site observation 141120 I 9:00 - 10:30 AM
Information for participants:

My name is Yucui He (Grace), I’m a Master of Landscape Architecture by project post graduate student at Unitec New Zealand. I’m currently doing a research project on how urban design practices can accommodate cultural diversity and contribute positively to multicultural communities. My research area is Upper Hobson and Nelson Street (please refer to the map below).

The purpose of my research is:

- To develop a conceptual framework to assist in understanding multiple cultural values in urban landscapes.
- To identify the opportunities and the challenges of how multicultural values can be integrated and used in urban design practice.
- To investigate how urban landscapes can be designed and managed to foster positive community relations, and promotes interactions in an ethno-cultural neighbourhood.
This research will provide design solutions and recommendations on how urban design practice can help improve the living environment among culturally diverse neighbourhoods.

In order to complete my research, I would be grateful for your participation in this survey, the survey will approximately take about 10 minutes, and it will ask:

- General information about you and your cultural/ethnic background.
- Your experiences and perceptions on use a public urban space in your neighbourhood.
- Your vision on how to improve the living environment around your neighbourhood.

Please feel free to complete this survey in your own language, this survey is completely confidential and anonymous, the survey data’s will be securely saved in computer with password protection, if you wish to withdraw any data in the next two weeks after survey or if you have any questions or concerns about this survey please contact me or my supervisors.

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Thanks for your participate and support

Yucui
### Appendix 2

**Face-to-face Interview**

**Typical interview questions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part one:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Where are you from (Place of birth)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How long have you lived in this area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why did you choose to live in this area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What language do you speak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What types of transport do you use in your daily commute?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eg: walking, bike, motor bike, bus, car.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Part two:
Living Environment: In this survey, the definition of ‘Living environment’ regards to nature, safety, healthiness, cosiness and the aesthetic of the place you’re living in. It also relates to services, such as schools and grocery stores, public transport connections, lighting and pedestrian traffic lanes.

Public space: In this survey, the definition of ‘Public space’ means a place for gathering and social events which generally open and accessible to people, no fees or paid tickets are required for entry. For example roads (including the pavement), public squares, parks and beaches are typically considered public space.

- How do you describe your neighbourhood especially the living environment?
  Eg: the natural surroundings, service, traffic.

- How often do you use the public space around your neighbourhood? And outside your neighbourhood? Where is it and what is the purpose you use it for? (Please indicate the public space you use on the map below)

Part three:
- What do you like about the living environment in your neighbourhood?

- What don’t you like about the living environment in your neighbourhood?

- What is your vision to improve the living environment in your neighbourhood? Would you please describe it?

- Do you have any positive or negative experiences when you are using public space?

Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape
Appendix 3

GROUNDCOVERS
- Pratia angulata
- Coprosma repens 'Prostrata'
- Dichondra repens
- Coprosma acerosa 'red rocks'
(700mm ctrs - Pb3)

CLIMBERS
- Ficus pumila
- Metrosideros carminea
- Phormium 'Green Dwarf'
- Phormium 'Black Rage'
- Phormium 'Pepe'
- Ophiopogon japonicus *
- Libertia ixioides
- Libertia grandiflora
- Canna generalis

SHRUBS - MONOCOTS
- Phormium cookianum 'subsp hookeri'
SHRUBS - DICOTS

- Carex comans
- Dietes grandiflora
- Hebe 'Wiri Charm'
- Alocasia cucullata
- Griselinia littoralis
- Coprosma 'Middlemore' *
- Dietes grandiflora
- Lomandra 'Tanika'
- Hebe 'Wiri Mist'
- Pseudopanax laetus
- Griselinia littoralis
- Cordyline 'Falcon'
- Hebe obtusata
- Coprosma neglecta
- Camellia 'lemon drop'
- Apodasmia-similis
- Carex lambertiana
- Hebe chathamica
- Hebe 'Wiri Mist'
- Coprosma neglecta
- Pseudopanax laetus
- Carex comans
- Carex testacea
- Carex virgata
- Carex virgata
- Hebe obtusata
- Corokia x virgata 'Frosted Chocolate'
- Fargesia sp. 'Rufa'
- Carex comans
- Carex testacea
- Carex virgata
- Carex virgata
- Hebe obtusata

FEATURE SHRUBS

- Dwarf Hibiscus (As shown - Pb8)
- Pseudopanax laetus
- Hebe 'Wiri Charm'
- Hebe 'Wiri Mist'
- Hebe 'Tanika'
- Hebe 'Wiri Mist'
- Hebe 'Tanika'

HEDGES

- Fargesia sp. 'Rufa'
- Corokia x virgata 'Geentys Green'
- Corokia x virgata 'Geentys Green'

PLANTING PALETTE

Multiculturalism in the Urban Landscape
Appendix 3
Public/open space strategy:

- Knightia excelsa rewarewa (7x3m)
- Sophora microphylla kowhai (5x3m)
- Metrosideros excelsa ‘Mistral’ pohutukawa (6x4m)
- Cordyline australis cabbage tree (6x2m)
- Melicytus ramiflorus mahoe (4.5x2m)
- Vitex lucens puniri (6x4m)

Movement strategy:

- Vitex lucens puniri (6x4m)
- Meryta sinclairii puka (6x3.5m)
- Paidium littorale var ‘longipes’ cherry guava (5x3m)
- Prunus Accolade flowering Cherry (4x5m)
- Magnolia grandiflora ‘little gem’ (7x4m)
- Metrosideros excelsa ‘Mistral’ pohutukawa (6x4m)

Community / third space strategy:

- Feijoa spp (4x4m)
- Citrus meyeri (5x2m)
- Alectryon excelsus titoki (7x4m)
- Michelia figo port wine magnolia (4.5x3m)
- Prunus Accolade flowering Cherry (4x5m)